

**California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
Madera County Public Forum
Madera, CA – May 19, 2006**

Member Testimony

Senator Jeff Denham (12th Senate District)

- Voiced support for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership).
- Highway 99 needs funding for repairs and to alleviate congestion.
- Building a Medical Center at UC Merced will bring needed general practitioners, specialists and other sustainable jobs to the San Joaquin Valley (Valley).
- The state needs to pay its part in the 50/50 match for education.
- Proactive solutions need to be developed for water storage and the potential Avian Bird Flu epidemic.
- The Partnerships success requires the Valley speaking with one voice and educating California that the Valleys problems aren't just Valley problems – they are California problems.

Assemblyman David Cogdill (25th Assembly District)

- Voiced support the Partnership.
- Encourages the Valley to take advantage of the Partnership and a Governor who is trying to fix California.
- Success requires finding a common ground of all the various businesses and Valley counties and speaking with one voice:
 - Examples of common issues are responsible growth and a comprehensive water policy.
- Recognize that 5% of the tax payers are the source of most state revenues:
 - These taxpayers are baby boomers, they are retiring and they are leaving the state.

Government Panel

Frank Bigelow – Madera County Board of Supervisors

- The Children's Hospital of Madera County is a symbol of success for Madera because it was necessary and they fought hard for it.
- Cannot forget about the surrounding counties – Mariposa and Mono have an impact on the region as well.
- Growth drives everything and the Valley is growing:
 - If the Valley economy stays agricultural, the San Joaquin needs more water, better education and better roads.
 - If the Valley economy broadens its horizon then the counties need to work in a cooperative effort.
- Sustainable jobs require a better educated work force.
- Creation of a medical center at UC Merced is necessary and will provide sustainable jobs.

Steve Mindt – Vice Mayor, City of Madera and Chairman, Madera Compact

- Madera will grow 150% by 2020 and the city lacks the infrastructure to sustain that growth.
- The city of Madera cannot continue to raise taxes to pay for needed infrastructure:
 - Madera's average buying income is less than the states average.
 - Caltrans no longer funds over spans and clover leafs with Highway 99.
- Gang violence is a concern for the city:
 - The city police are working with state police and the federal government to build a gang task force.

Dr. Sally Frazier – Superintendent, Madera County Office of Education

- Communication is the key to making improvements.
- Coalition building is a great way to make a strong point:
 - Central Valley Education Coalition is a good example of a successful coalition
 - It is comprised of 109 school districts and it represents the unique needs of the San Joaquin Valley.
- Support vocational education.
- Develop a better policy for migrant education.
- The high school exit exam is important:
 - Students act differently because they believe the exam matters.
- Transportation is a key issue:
 - Well maintained roads are essential to commuting to school.
- Work with educators to promote cultural awareness.

Angel Johnston – Community and Economic Specialist – City of Chowchilla

- City of Chowchilla supports the Partnership.
- Chowchilla is growing fast and the City is trying to develop neighborhoods that are integrated and not separated by income.
- Small cities that are growing fast need assistance with infrastructure development:
 - Small cities lack the revenues to build the infrastructure fast enough.

John Anderson – Sheriff, Madera County

- Madera has a methamphetamine problem.
- Proposition 36 is not always an effective tool:
 - Serious crimes involving drug dealers are pleaded down and the dealers don't serve jail time.
- Highway 99 needs a third lane.
- Raise the speed limit for trucks on Interstate 5:
 - This may divert truck traffic from Highway 99 to Interstate 5.

Elaine Bethel-Fink – North Fork Rancheria Mono Indians

- Madera has one of the lowest per capita incomes in California.
- 28% of children live in poverty.
- 50% of Hispanic and Native American children live in poverty.
- Madera is one of the fastest growing areas and they need sustainable jobs.
- Building a casino between Madera and Chowchilla can provide sustainable jobs.

Stell Manfredi – Madera County Administrative Office

- “Wealth and prosperity create wealth and prosperity.”
 - When a county or area has an attractive quality or feature, it brings attention and people.
 - Let the Valley share in the State’s prosperity.

Business Panel

Herman Perez – Madera Chamber of Commerce

- Focus on small business because they are integral to the community:
 - Small business owners are integrated and involved in the community.
- Stop producing regulations that hinder the growth of cities and small businesses.
- Offer big business incentives to small businesses.

Stephen Rico – President Madera Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

- Latinos represent a large section of the county’s and city’s population:
 - 70% - city of Madera.
 - 35% - county of Madera.
- The Hispanic Chamber plays many roles in the County of Madera:
 - Assists local businesses,
 - Helps with vocational training,
 - Assists Mexican tourism,
 - Acts as social agency for the Hispanic community, and
 - Helps bring industry to the area. For example, the brought Air Mexico to the Fresno airport.
- The Partnership should consider funding for Highway 41.
- Develop affordable housing for minorities.

Julia Berry – Executive Director, Madera County Farm Bureau

- Create a regional market plan for the Valley that reflects its unique qualities.
- Incentive local governments with money to do good things.
- 86% of Californians believe farmers and farm land are extremely important, so the state should provide money to the farmland conservatory.
- The state should provide matching funds for Madera’s water banking program.
- Transportation dollars are important to the area:
 - The Valley hosts the states two major arteries.
- The Valley is important because it not only provides food to the nation, but it provides food to the world.

Bobby Kahn – Executive Director, Madera County Economic Development Commission

- State government is overly regulating business.
- Enterprise Zones are an important tool to Madera.
- Consider the regional marketing plan created by the Central California Economic Development Corporation.
- The Labor and Work Force Development agency should continue to support CalBiz.

Jackson Baker – President, Madera Quarry

- Aggregates are extremely important because they are used to build almost everything.
- Madera County transports aggregates from Coalinga and the San Joaquin River:
 - This costs Madera builders about \$10,000 in transportation costs.
- Madera should consider an aggregate site for their county:
 - It will help bring housing cost down.

Community Panel

Steve Mindt – Vice Mayor, City of Madera and Chairman, Madera Compact

- The Madera Compact is collaboration between business, education and government in the community:
 - The goal is to increase communication between the entities and help encourage kids to stay in school and pursue higher education.

Tim Curley – Vice President, Hospital Council of Northern and Central California

- Educate legislators that are doing harm to the Valley.
- The partnership plan should be more proactive and focus on a few big goals.
- Health care in the Valley is an important issue and it should be a critical component.
- Support SB 167 – this bill provides more time for hospitals in lower earthquake risk zones to retrofit their facilities.
- Support SB A47 – this bill increases the amount of time part time community college faculty can teach.
- Three priorities for health care:
 - Medical Center at UC Merced.
 - Nurse and education consortium.
 - Reimbursement for Medi-Cal benefits.

Chris White – General Manager of Central California Irrigation District

- More money is needed to support water storage projects.
- There are too many water quality regulations.

Bob Carlson – Chairman, Madera County Work Board Investment

- Workforce demographics are changing: skilled labor is leaving and the ethnic workforce is growing.
- Priorities for the workforce investment board: fully fund the workforce act and maintain autonomy for local workforce investment groups.

Hub Walsh – Director, Social Services

- Need the opportunity to compete for job development and economic assistance.
- Workforce development should specialize in education and language development.
- Develop treatment center for methamphetamine addicts.
- Develop a regional Valley plan for drug problems and not 8 separate county plans.

Gary Savanda – Former Mayor Madera

- Madera's 3 priorities:
 - Education.
 - Beautification .
 - Diversification.
- Education is the cornerstone of any well developed and qualified workforce.
- Beautification is making the valley more beautiful:
 - The Partnership should develop a regional beautification plan.
- Diversification in employment is necessary:
 - The valley should open up to jobs and industries that provide training and career paths.